



INFORMATION FOR VISITING CHOIRS

Version: March 2024

Contact information

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Introduction

We are very grateful to all who come and sing for our services when our Cathedral Choirs are on holiday. We hope that you enjoy the experience of leading the worship at Rochester and feel welcomed by the Cathedral staff. These notes aim to answer many questions you may have before your visit, but if you still have unanswered questions, please do contact us.

Arranging a visit

We try and book choirs at least a year in advance, so please contact us as early as you like. The contact for visiting choirs is the Assistant Director of Music. Before a date can be finalised, we may ask for a reference from another Cathedral or choral foundation at which you have sung recently. We also require you to sign and return the Safeguarding for Visiting Groups forms before your visit, which outlines your responsibilities in these areas. If all is well, we can then negotiate a date (or dates) for your visit.

Normal Routine

Our normal rehearsal and service times are:

Weekdays	15.30	Cathedral Organ available for practise, and Crypt available for choir rehearsal/robing
	16.30 – 17.20	Rehearsal in Quire Stalls
	17.30 – 18.05	Evensong
Saturdays	13:00	Crypt available for choir rehearsal/robing
(and bank holidays)	13:30	Cathedral Organ available for practise
	14.30 – 15.05	Rehearsal in Quire Stalls
	15.15 – 16.00	Evensong
Sundays	8.30	Organ and/or Choir rehearsal in the Nave/Quire stalls
	8.30	Crypt available for choir rehearsal/robing
	9.30 – 10.10	Matins
	10.30 – 11.30	Sung Eucharist
	13:30	Cathedral Organ available for practise
	14.30 – 15.05	Rehearsal in Quire Stalls
	15.15 – 16.00	Evensong

Please note that the Quire is accessed by several steps from all directions. If this presents a problem for choir members with mobility issues, then Matins and Evensong can be held in the Nave instead – please contact the Assistant Director of Music if this is the case.

Choirs who sing a full week are expected to have one evening off; this is usually a Saturday, but this is your choice. The Cathedral Choir's tradition is to normally sing Friday evensong entirely unaccompanied with no organ music before or after the service, but visiting choirs are welcome to use the organ if required.

Organist

We would expect you to bring your own organist, who should be competent and able to play a large organ confidently. The organist will be expected to play for the entire service, including voluntaries and hymns. Notes regarding the use of the organ are at the end of this document. **Please note that the steps up to the organ loft are very narrow and extremely steep.** We regret that there is no Chamber Organ to use in the Cathedral, but the Choir division of the organ fulfils this purpose very effectively in the Quire.

Choosing your music

Except for the hymns and psalms, you have free choice of the music, subject to our agreement. Anthems should be liturgically and seasonally appropriate, not too short or long and **well within the capabilities of the choir** – we appreciate simple music sung well.

You are welcome to request the Psalm texts and readings for each service, which may help with your music choice. You are welcome to choose the pointing and chant(s) for the Psalms. The canticles at Evensong or Matins can be sung to plainsong or Anglican chant if necessary. You are expected to provide your own music copies and asked not to touch any part of the Cathedral Choirs' Music Libraries.

The Cathedral uses the *New English Hymnal* for most services; occasionally other hymn books are used, especially at the Sung Eucharist. There are limited number of hymn books available for visiting choirs to use, so it is advisable that you bring your own copies of the hymns.

Where to stay

Please help us update this list by telling us of any other appropriate options and of any options which are no longer available.

Travelodge, Rochester

11 Cory's Road, Rochester, ME1 1PZ.

Tel: 0871 984 8484, Web: www.travelodge.co.uk/hotels/663/Rochester-hotel

Premier Inn, Strood

Medway Valley Leisure Park, Chariot Way, Rochester, ME2 2SS

Tel: 0871 527 8938, Web: www.premierinn.com

Holiday Inn, Chatham

Maidstone Road, Chatham, ME5 9SF

Tel: 0870 4009069, Web: www.holidayinn.com

Travelodge, Chatham Maritime

Chatham Historic Dockyard, Western Avenue, Chatham, ME4 4NT.

Tel: 0871 559 1878, Web: www.travelodge.co.uk

Capstone Farm Youth Hostel

Capstone Farm, 377 Capstone Road, Gillingham, ME7 3JE

Tel: 01634 400788

Cobham Hall School

Mr Nick Powell, Bursar, Cobham Hall School, Cobham Kent

Tel: 01474 823371, Email: enquiries@cobhamhall.com

University of Greenwich, Medway Campus – Flats of 5/6 single-bed rooms.

Conference Office, Avery Hill Campus, Southwood Site, Avery Hill Road, Eltham, SE9 2UG

Tel: 020 8331 8121, Email: me.accomodation@greenwich.ac.uk

Arrival

Upon arrival, please make yourself known to a Verger. Should you have any problems on the day of arrival, the vergers' direct dial is 01634 810075.

Robing

Choirs are welcome to wear their usual singing attire. If you normally robe with surplices, please wear cassocks for all rehearsals in the Stalls.

Parking

We are unfortunately unable to offer any parking spaces around the Cathedral, as there are ANPR cameras which will issue penalties to anyone who drives down College Yard past the West Door of the Cathedral. There are parking restrictions during the daytime from Mondays to Saturdays in the roads surrounding the Cathedral, however, these are less restricted on a Sunday. Pay & Display parking is available in the Boley Hill Car Park directly opposite the Cathedral, and additionally at the 'Cathedral' car park off Northgate.

Please note that Rochester High Street is closed to traffic on a Saturday between 10am and 4pm, where ANPR cameras are also in operation to fine any vehicles who drive down the High Street during this period.

Fire evacuation

Documents regarding fire evacuation from the Cathedral should be sent to you by the Assistant Director of Music. If you have not received these, then please let us know as it is very important to familiarise yourself with the routes out of the Cathedral.

Processions & Order

The verger will be able to guide you through the procession: please arrange a time upon arrival. At weekends there is usually a verger to lead the choir in and out. Here, in any case, is a short guide.

For *Evensong in the Quire*, the choir assembles at the top of the Crypt steps, by the South Door. After a short prayer, the procession moves a small distance down the South Aisle and up the Pulpitum steps, under the organ screen. Enter the Stalls by their nearest end. Remain facing east until the Precentor arrives; bow with the Precentor then face inwards. If an introit is sung, it can be sung from the Nave, at the bottom of the Pulpitum steps, or after having processed into the Quire stalls. Quiet organ music should cover the procession into the Quire, after the introit.

At the end of the service, turn east, then bow (led by the conductor), then wait for a verger to appear (if there is one) and leave the Stalls, heading east and turning right and then right again down the Kent Steps to be dismissed from the top of the Crypt steps.

For *Eucharists in the Nave*, the choir assembles in the same place, and then processes in during the first hymn, all the way down the South Aisle and up the Centre Aisle, round the altar to the Stalls. Without bowing, face inwards for the remainder of the hymn and for all musical items, but turn East to face the President for the spoken parts if he or she is on the Pulpitum Steps. Face West for the Gospel and face across the Nave for the Creed. Communion is administered to the choir in a semi-circle east of the altar (the front rows stay in their places, the back rows join onto the ends). After the final hymn, begin processing out as the verger appears at the Nave Altar (without bowing), and follow out, through the Centre Aisle and down the South Aisle, to be dismissed from the usual place. During Eastertide, the procession starts during the hymn, the choir following the clergy, pausing at the West Door in the centre aisle, where the blessing and dismissal takes place; the procession then continues back down the South Aisle.

For *Eucharists in the Quire*, the choir assembles in the same place, and then processes in to the first hymn, the same route as at Evensong. Face the clergy for the spoken parts of the service and turn East for the Creed. Communion is administered to the choir in standing positions near the High Altar: process up in two lines, pausing at the step in line with the lectern and pulpit until the clergy are ready to administer. Once they have received, each member of the choir returns to the Stalls individually. At the end, process out as for Evensong, except without bowing.

For *all services*, please maintain a uniformity of posture (eg. position of hands) and agree how the choir will kneel. The Quire Stalls hold about 32 in two rows either side, with the option of a further 10 by entering the back rows. Please arrange with a vergier if you require more space than this. The Nave Stalls are similar, but if a third row is required, one row will sit on the benches with no backs.

Audio Recording

If you would like to record your services while you are here, please obtain permission in advance – there is no recording equipment currently available in the Cathedral. Video Recording will not normally be allowed.

Order of Services

Sung Eucharist (held in the Nave or Quire during August)

Sundays at 10.30am

Organ Music	<i>Stop at around 10.29am</i>
Processional Hymn	<i>May be announced, or organist to play over when signal is given</i> <i>The service continues according to the booklet in use on the day; below is an outline:</i>
Opening Prayers	
(Kyrie	<i>Sung in Advent and Lent only)</i>
Gloria	<i>Omitted in Advent and Lent.</i> <i>If there is an intonation, a member of the choir should sing this.</i>
Collect	<i>Said Amen</i>
First Reading	
Gradual Hymn	<i>Unannounced if printed in order of service</i>
Second Reading	
Organ Improvisation	<i>Quiet; lasting about 15 seconds until the Gospel party reaches the altar and lifts the Gospel Book; end on the chord which starts the acclamation.</i>
Gospel Acclamation	<i>Normally "Alleluia", but in Lent "Praise to you, O Christ..."</i> <i>(see back page); once chord is given, choir sings once, then again with congregation. Cantor (full or soloist) sings verse (printed in the weekly sheet, point to fit), then all repeat the acclamation.</i> <i>After the Gospel, all say "Praise to you, O Christ", then Organ Chord prior to the acclamation once more. This is followed by an organ improvisation (at all times of the year) to reflect the Gospel</i>
Sermon	
Creed	<i>Said, facing across the Nave</i>
Intercessions	
Peace	<i>Stand promptly to lead the congregation</i>
Offertory Hymn	<i>Unannounced if printed in order of service; organist improvise at end until collection has been received and the altar party are ready</i>
Sursum Corda	<i>Sung (see back page); no note given</i>
Eucharistic Prayer	<i>Including Sanctus and optional Benedictus (unless very long)</i>
The Lord's Prayer	<i>Said</i>
Communion	Agnus Dei <i>sung while altar party are communicating. Then stand in a semi-circle east of the altar (the front rows stay in their places, the back rows join onto the ends) for communion.</i>
Communion Motet	
Communion Hymn	<i>Unannounced, organist to play over as soon as choir have finished Motet</i>
Post-Communion Prayer	
Closing Hymn	<i>Unannounced if printed in order of service</i>
Dismissal	
Organ Voluntary	

Evensong (Quire)

Weekdays at 5.30pm, Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays at 3.15pm

Organ Music	
(Introit)	<i>(Only on Saints days & Festivals; not announced)</i>
(Sentences / Welcome / Confession)	<i>(Sundays only; ending with The Lord's Prayer; kneel after "saying after [or with] me")</i>
Opening Responses	<i>Organist may need to give a note for the Precentor</i>
Office Hymn	<i>Announced</i>
Psalm	<i>Announced</i>
First Lesson	<i>Sit</i>
Magnificat	<i>Not announced</i>
Second Lesson	<i>Sit</i>
Nunc Dimittis	<i>Not announced</i>
Creed	<i>All turn East</i>
Responses	<i>Organist may need to give a note for the Precentor</i>
The Lord's Prayer	<i>The choir starts this all together, not the Precentor.</i> N. B. 'who art', 'on earth', 'those who'
Responses & Collects	<i>Three collects, but usually four in Advent and Lent</i>
Anthem	<i>Announced</i>
Intercessions	<i>Kneel; ends with the Grace</i>
(Hymn)	<i>(Bank Holidays, Saturdays and Sundays only; announced; with collection)</i>
(Blessing)	<i>(Bank Holidays, Saturdays and Sundays only; said Amen)</i>
Organ Voluntary	

Matins (Quire)

Sundays at 9.30am

Organ Music	
Opening Responses	<i>Organist may need to give a note for Precentor</i>
Welcome	
Venite	<i>Announced</i>
Psalm	<i>Announced</i>
First Lesson	<i>Sit</i>
Canticle 1	<i>Te Deum (or Benedicite in Lent or Advent)</i>
Second Lesson	<i>Sit</i>
Canticle 2	<i>Jubilate (not in Lent or Advent) or Benedictus</i>
Creed	<i>All turn East</i>
Responses	<i>Organist may need to give a note for Precentor</i>
The Lord's Prayer	<i>The choir starts this all together, not the Precentor.</i> N. B. 'who art', 'on earth', 'those who'
Responses & Collects	<i>Three collects, but usually four in Advent and Lent</i>
NO ANTHEM OR INTERCESSIONS	
Hymn	<i>Announced</i>
NO BLESSING	
Organ Voluntary	

Organ Specification (Mander Organs, 1989. Piston system upgraded in 2012, Swell reeds replaced in 2016)

Great Organ

Double Open Diapason	16ft
Open Diapason I	8ft
Open Diapason II	8ft
Chimney Flute	8ft
Octave	4ft
Principal	4ft
Spitzflute	4ft
Twelfth	2 2/3 ft
Fifteenth	2ft
Recorder	2ft
Tierce	1 3/5 ft
Full Mixture	IV
Sharp Mixture	IV

Tremulant

Posaune	8ft
Clarion	4ft

Choir to Great

Swell to Great

Solo to Great

Solo Organ (enclosed)

Wald Flute	8ft
Viola	8ft
Viola Celeste	8ft
Flûte Harmonique	4ft
Piccolo	2ft
Corno di Bassetto	8ft
Vox Humana	8ft

Tremulant

Posaune (<i>from Great</i>)	8ft
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Clarion (<i>from Great</i>)	4ft
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Tuba (<i>unenclosed</i>)	8ft
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Octave

Sub Octave

Unison Off

Choir Organ

Stopped Diapason	8ft
Dulciana	8ft
Principal	4ft
Nason Flute	4ft
Flageolet	2ft
Larigot	1 1/3 ft
Sesquialtera	II
Mixture	II

Tremulant

Swell to Choir

Solo to Choir

Pedal Organ

Subbass (<i>rank A</i>)	32ft
Open Wood	16ft
Open Diapason	16ft
Violone	16ft
Bourdon (<i>rank A</i>)	16ft
Principal	8ft
Gemshorn	8ft
Bass Flute (<i>rank A</i>)	8ft
Fifteenth	4ft
Flute (<i>rank A</i>)	4ft
Mixture	IV
Contra Trombone (<i>rank B</i>)	32ft
Ophicleide	16ft
Trombone (<i>rank B</i>)	16ft
Fagotto (<i>from Swell</i>)	16ft
Trumpet	8ft
Clarion	4ft

Choir to Pedal

Great to Pedal

Swell to Pedal

Solo to Pedal

Swell Organ

Bourdon	16ft
Open Diapason	8ft
Lieblich Gedeckt	8ft
Salicional	8ft
Voix Celeste	8ft
Principal	4ft
Suabe Flute	4ft
Fifteenth	2ft
Mixture	III-IV
Sharp Mixture	III
Hautboy	8ft

Tremulant

Contra Fagotto	16ft
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Trumpet	8ft
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Clarion	4ft
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Octave

Sub Octave

Unison Off

Solo to Swell

Accessories

Great & Pedal Combs Coupled

Generals on Swell Toe Pistons

Full Organ drawstop (*adjustable behind music desk*)

West Shutters On (Swell)

8 thumb pistons to each manual department

8 general thumb pistons

8 toe pistons toe Pedal and Swell

Stepper up (>) and down

(<) thumb and toe pistons

4 banks of 200 general memory levels

32 divisional memory levels

Blower

The organ is switched on by the single switch to the right of the organists' knees. The additional pair of switches are for the console lights. Please leave the Swell and Solo boxes **open** when turning off the organ.

Sound System

The power button for the sound system is on the bottom right of the mixer unit above the swell and pedal stops. There are separate volume controls for the Nave and Quire feeds. The Nave feed needs to be turned up as high as possible in order to hear the choir. The feed for the PA system is not currently working.

Camera System

- The power button for the monitor is on the bottom right-hand corner of the screen.
- Pressing **SD1** on the monitor will display the **Nave** camera, whereas pressing **SD2** will display the **Quire** camera.
- Both cameras can be controlled from the blue control panel below the Swell stops by selecting the relevant camera from the row of yellow buttons. Twisting the joystick will zoom the selected camera in and out.
- The control panel will go into sleep mode after a while, but it can be reactivated by pressing any of the buttons.

Pistons

There are divisional and general channels allocated to visiting organists on bank 0 – please see the notice below the Choir stops. Please ensure you leave a note on the console if you want to keep your settings (and indicate for how long you need them). **Please do not alter any other piston memories.**

Balance

Generally speaking, you need to play much louder than you think at all times, due to the proximity of the console to the pipework. The exception to this is the Choir division which speaks very clearly into the Quire, so it needs to be used with care in accompaniments. The Swell division is immediately above the console and is very loud for the organist, but is nowhere near as loud downstairs – it is actually possible to use Full Swell for a medium sized choir singing fortissimo. It is also advisable to have some of the Solo and Choir divisions coupled through as much as possible in order to achieve a balanced and cohesive sound from the organ.

It is also worth bearing in mind that the organ is designed to speak to the East, so for a service in the Nave, you will need a much louder sound than you might think. As a minimum, hymns should not be played on anything less than Great up to 2' and Swell up to both Mixtures with the box always open.

Practice

Please book in any additional practice time in advance with the Assistant Director of Music. Please refer to the weekly music list to the right of the console for any additional services that may be taking place. Organ playing must stop completely 10 minutes before any service (including the 1.00pm Eucharist on a Thursday) and at 10.55am to 11.05am on Saturday for the Turning of the Page.

